

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ISO-00

SAM-01 SAJ-01 AID-05 OMB-01 NIC-01 IO-10 /076 W

----- 024201

R 041906Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7928

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 01726

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVE PARTY VIEWS ON PORTUGAL

REF:A)LONDON 1628; B) STATE 22603

1. MICHAEL YOUNG, CONSERVATIVE PARTY RESEARCH OFFICE,
WHO ACCOMPANIED SHADOW SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AND COMMON-
WEALTH AFFAIRS (FCO) GEOFFREY RIPPON ON RECENT VISIT TO
ATTEND CDS CONFERENCE IN OPORTO, ASKED TO SEE CHARGE
FEBRUARY 4 AT RIPPON'S REQUEST. PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT
WAS TO PROVIDE EXTREMELY PESSIMISTIC VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS
IN PORTUGAL AND TO URGE US FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO
"CENTER" PARTIES OF PORTUGAL TO HELP THEM STEM THE
"DRIFT TO THE LEFT."

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2. YOUNG SAID HE HAD BEEN WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS FOR OVER A YEAR. HIS FIRST TRIP TO PORTUGAL HAD BEEN AT THE REQUEST OF THEN SIR ALEC HOME IN AN EFFORT TO IDENTIFY GROUPS AND FORCES IN PORTUGAL WHICH CONSERVATIVE PARTY MIGHT GUIDE AND HELP IN DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN POST-CAETANO ERA. CONSERVATIVES HAD CENTERED ON CDS AS MOST APPROPRIATE GROUPING. THIS CONSERVATIVE EFFORT WAS PART OF A BI-PARTISAN INTEREST IN PORTUGAL; THE LABOR PARTY AND THE TUC WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN VISITS AND ATTEMPTS TO AID THEIR COUNTERPART ORGANIZATIONS.

3. YOUNG SAID HE AND RIPPON BELIEVE THAT EVENTS SHOW A DEFINITE AND VERY RAPID DRIFT TOWARD THE LEFT IN PORTUGAL. SOARES AND HIS PARTY, THE PPD, CANNOT CHECK THIS DRIFT AND THERE SEEMS TO BE NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE PPD AND CDS CAN REACH AGREEMENT ON A UNIFIED PROGRAM TO COMBAT THE COMMUNISTS, PERHAPS LARGELY BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES SOARES IS HAVING IN HIS OWN PARTY.

4. THE CONSERVATIVES ARE CONVINCED THAT THE OPORTO EVENTS WERE DIRECTLY ORGANIZED AND DIRECTED BY THE COMMUNISTS. COMMUNIST TACTICS ARE TO CHOP OFF OPPOSING PARTIES ONE BY ONE, AND THE CDS SEEMS NEXT IN LINE. THERE IS A GREAT CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION NOW GOING ON, AS A RESULT OF WHICH FAMILIES OF CDS HAVE BEEN MOVED OUT OF THEIR HOMES AND THE LEADERS ARE MOVING AROUND FROM PLACE TO PLACE TO AVOID ARREST OR WORSE.

5. BOTH THE PPD AND THE CDS ARE SHORT OF MONEY TO FINANCE THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND EFFORTS TO OBTAIN HELP ABROAD HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE. THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE GIVEN SOME MONEY IN THE PAST AND ARE NOW CANVASSING FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE. SINCE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PARTIES FROM ABROAD ARE "ILLEGAL," THESE HAVE BEEN HANDLED MOSTLY THROUGH COVERT CHANNELS. (HERE YOUNG MENTIONED THE EXISTENCE OF A SWISS BANK ACCOUNT FOR THE CDS AND THE VISIT TO LONDON OF A CDS OFFICIAL WHO IS SEEKING FINANCIAL AID.) THE CDS IS SO SHORT OF MONEY IT CAN'T AFFORD POSTAGE; YOUNG SAID THAT THE PARTY WILL BE FINANCIALLY BANKRUPT BY THE END OF THIS WEEK (FEBRUARY 8) UNLESS

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HELP IS OBTAINED.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY IS BEING WELL FINANCED FROM MOSCOW. IT HAS ACTIVE AGENTS OUT CARRYING ON AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN TO EDUCATE THE PORTUGUESE, MOST OF WHOM ARE NAIVE AND POLITICALLY INERT. YOUNG ALSO BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PORTUGUESE SPEAKING CZECHS IN THE COUNTRY WHO ARE ACTIVE AGENTS FOR

THE COMMUNIST PARTY. USSR IS ALSO PUTTING ON PRESSURE TO
GET PORT FACILITIES FOR SOVIET FISHING FLEET.

7. IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, YOUNG SAID THAT
THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HMG'S VIEWS ON THE SITUA-
TION AND THE CONSERVATIVE VIEWS; YOUNG AND RIPPON HAD
BEEN DEBRIEFED BY THE FCO AFTER RETURNING LAST WEEK FROM
PORTUGAL AND RIPPON HAD A BRIEF EXCHANGE WITH FOREIGN
SECRETARY CALLAGHAN BEFORE THE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 01726

WASHINGTON. RIPPON EXPECTS TO SEE CALLAGHAN AGAIN BEFORE
CALLAGHAN LEAVES FOR LISBON FEBRUARY 7. YOUNG DOES NOT

EXPECT THAT CALLAGHAN WILL HAVE A BLANK CHECK IN HIS POCKET FOR THE VISIT, HOWEVER.

8. WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY, YOUNG SAID HEATH WAS MORE ENGAGED IN THINKING ABOUT HIS OWN POLITICAL FUTURE THAN ABOUT PORTUGAL. RIPPON, AS SHADOW SPOKESMAN ON FCO AFFAIRS, WAS GETTING ESTABLISHED AND WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION.

9. RE POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF THE AFM, YOUNG SAID THAT PERHAPS 17 OF THE 20 MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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EFFECTIVE POWER CENTER IN PORTUGAL, WERE LEFTIST RADICALS AND PROBABLY HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE COMMUNISTS. THE AFM AS A WHOLE HE CHARACTERIZED AS POLITICALLY INEXPERIENCED, CAPABLE OF BEING INFLUENCED AND LED.

10. YOUNG EXPRESSED AGREEMENT WITH POINTS WE MADE BASED ON STATE 22603, BUT HIGHLIGHTED AGAIN GRAVITY OF SITUATION AS CONSERVATIVES SEE IT. HE IS CONVINCED THAT UNITARY LABOR LAW REPRESENTS A "DEAL" BETWEEN AFM AND THE COMMUNISTS, BY WHICH AFM AGREED TO LABOR UNITY BUT REFUSED TO GIVE GROUND TO COMMUNIST PRESSURE TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS. HE THINKS COMMUNISTS WOULD LIKE STILL TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS TO ALLOW FOR GREATER COMMUNIST VOTE; HE ESTIMATES THAT COMMUNISTS MIGHT GAIN ONLY 10 PERCENT OF TOTAL VOTE IF ELECTIONS HELD NOW, BUT THIS AMOUNT COULD GROW CONSIDERABLY IF PARTY SUCCEEDS IN LOPPING OFF EFFECTIVENESS OF OTHER NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES BEFORE ELECTION.

11. AFM IS CONVINCED THAT COUNTER-COUP FROM THE RIGHT IS STILL A POSSIBILITY AND POSSIBLY THIS WEEKEND THERE WILL BE A NUMBER OF ARRESTS OF NON-COMMUNISTS, BOTH IN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN RANKS. AFM IS CONCERNED ABOUT PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE, BUT HAS TO HANDLE THEM "SENSITIVELY."

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